

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CO

SUBJECT: STATE VISIT OF COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT LOPEZ:

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATES

REF: STATE 039161

1. WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY PLANS TO ANNOUNCE DATES OF
LOPEZ VISIT AT SEPTEMBER 9 NOON BRIEFING. ANNOUNCEMENT
WILL BE ALONG LINES OF FOLLOWING:

WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED (ON FEBRUARY 21) THAT THE
PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA, ALFONSO LOPEZ MICHELSSEN, HAS
ACCEPTED PRESIDENT FORD'S INVITATION TO MAKE A STATE
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VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES THIS YEAR. I WOULD NOW LIKE

TO ANNOUNCE THAT PRESIDENT LOPEZ WILL ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON ON SEPTEMBER 25.

2. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS HAVE BEEN PREPARED FOR USE ON AN "IF ASKED" BASIS:

Q: WHAT WILL THE PRESIDENTS DISCUSS? WHY WAS THE COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT INVITED?

A: WE HAVE A LONG TRADITION OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THIS DEMOCRATIC NATION IN SOUTH AMERICA. THE PRESIDENT WANTED TO MEET PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND LOOKS FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WITH HIM. I EXPECT THE TWO PRESIDENTS WILL WISH TO REVIEW MATTERS RELATING TO HEMISPHERIC AND WORLD AFFAIRS AS WELL AS TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN GENERAL.

Q: WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME A LATIN AMERICAN CHIEF OF STATE MADE A STATE VISIT TO WASHINGTON?

A: THE LAST STATE VISIT BY A LATIN AMERICAN CHIEF OF STATE WAS THAT OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA OF MEXICO IN JUNE OF 1972. PRESIDENT FORD MET WITH PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN FEBRUARY WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER WAS IN THE UNITED STATES ON A PRIVATE VISIT. AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT ALSO CONFERRED AT THE BORDER WITH MEXICAN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA IN OCTOBER 1974 BUT THIS WILL BE THE FIRST STATE VISIT TO WASHINGTON SINCE THE VISIT OF ECHEVERRIA IN 1972.

Q: HAS PRESIDENT LOPEZ EVER BEEN HERE BEFORE?

A: HE HAS VISITED THE U.S. ON MANY OCCASIONS, GOING BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN HE WAS A STUDENT AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY. IN 1969, AS THE COLOMBIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, HE REPRESENTED HIS GOVERNMENT AT THE FUNERAL OF PRESIDENT EISENHOWER AND ACCOMPANIED FORMER COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS ON HIS STATE VISIT HERE. HE HAS ALSO ATTENDED OAS SESSIONS HERE.

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Q: WILL PRESIDENT LOPEZ TRAVEL ELSEWHERE IN THE U.S.?

A: WE UNDERSTAND HE PLANS TO TRAVEL TO NEW YORK AFTER THE WASHINGTON VISIT, BUT I HAVE NO DETAILS ON THAT. HE WILL SPEND THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 24 IN WILLIAMSBURG BEFORE PROCEEDING TO WASHINGTON.

Q: WHO WILL PRESIDENT LOPEZ SEE BESIDES PRESIDENT FORD?
WHO WILL BE ACCOMPANYING PRESIDENT LOPEZ?

A: THE STATE DEPARTMENT WILL ISSUE A PRESS RELEASE
ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE COLOMBIAN OFFICIAL PARTY AND
PRESIDENT LOPEZ'S SCHEDULE ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE
VISIT. WE DON'T HAVE ALL THE DETAILS YET.

3. PLEASE ADVISE GOC OF THE PROPOSED TEXT AND TIME OF
ANNOUNCEMENT. PLEASE NOTIFY DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY
IF GOC HAS ANY OBJECTIONS. WE WOULD WELCOME SIMILAR
ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATES BY GOC.

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